



Office of the Mayor

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Statement of Mayor Rhodes-Conway on Incident at First Street Shelter

Madison police officers responded quickly to shots being fired inside the men's shelter last night. They were fortunately already on the scene responding to a prior medical call. While the investigation is still underway, it appears that officers intervened in a very serious incident that could have been much worse. We usually have about 100 guests and staff at the men's shelter. We are all aware that there was a mass shooting in Boulder, Colorado the very same day, and tragically in that case the first officer on scene lost his life. I am grateful that this incident was contained quickly and that, beyond the two individuals involved, none of the guests or staff at the shelter or our responding officers were seriously injured.

As I have said before, our country needs meaningful gun control legislation at the state and federal level to take the torrent of cheap and available handguns off the streets. It is past time for legislative leaders to pass common sense gun safety laws. It is a terrible tragedy that gun violence happens everywhere in our society – in schools and supermarkets and spas and our streets and now in our homeless shelter.

I also ask that people resist the urge to use this isolated incident to equate homelessness with criminality. Madison shelters have been safely run and operated for decades, thanks to the dedication and hard work of many. All of us, including patrons of shelter facilities and those who staff them, have a right to sleep and work in a safe environment. To that end, we will be sitting down with our partners to review shelter safety and security procedures both at this temporary site, and for use in planning for the permanent shelter.

I also want to extend my sympathies to the shelter staff and guests who were forced to endure this traumatic event, and my hopes that the victim secures a full recovery.